THE PORT AUTHORITY OF NY & NJ Memorandum

TO: Nelson Chanfrau
FROM: David Warren
DATE: May 23, 1996
SUBJECT: WTC - CONCOURSE LEVEL - FINE & SHAPIRO RESTAURANT

COPY TO: G. Cummiskey, E. Petrick

At 1958 hours on May 21, 1996, a telephone call to the PAPD Emergency Desk identified an odor of smoke in the Fine and Shapiro Restaurant. At 2000 hours, a smoke detector alarm from device #2723 was received at the 5WTC Fire Command Station. A smoke condition was also noted in the kitchen area by the Manager of Fine and Shapiro Restaurant.

FDNY responded at 2005 hours. The fire was located in the HVAC control panel located in the utility room adjacent to the kitchen. Acting Battalion Chief, Bill Youngson, had the main power shut down to the panel which extinguished the fire. No other means of extinguishment was used.

The fire was limited to the confines of the HVAC control panel enclosure. This panel is used to control the HVAC and kitchen hood systems. The damage from the fire begins on the face of the panel where the keypad used to program the system is located. Wiring within the panel was damaged by the burning plastic. An examination of the electrical closet, the damaged HVAC control panel, and its components was performed by the Fire Protection Staff on May 22 at 0900 hours.

The fire appears to have originated in the control unit itself at the keypad. An increased amount of molten metal in the keypad and circuit board of the controller unit indicates this area as the point of origin. There was no damage beyond the panel itself.

While performing the investigation the manager of the restaurant, Bob Band, reported to Fire Protection staff that they were experiencing problems with the HVAC unit prior to the fire incident. At approximately 1700 hours that day, Bob was advised by his HVAC contractor that no one was available to check out the system. Bob was directed via telephone by the HVAC contractor on how to reprogram the panel to re-start the HVAC system. After attempting to re-start the system for 45 minutes, there were no positive results. The HVAC contractor arrived at 1915 hours and adjusted the system. Shortly after, Bob noticed a slight odor of smoke. Tiles in the kitchen were removed to trace the origin of the odor of smoke. It was then noted that the smoke was coming from the utility closet.

FDNY initially suspected that the fire was of suspicious origin. A FDNY Fire Marshall responded at 2235 hours and determined that the ignition of wood located on the floor below the panel was caused by molten plastic from the inside controller unit.

As a result of this incident, the solenoid valve controlling the cooking gas supply was shut down. A fire watch was instituted and the restaurant was re-opened for business on May 22 with the provisions that no cooking was allowed. Fire Protection staff have also witnessed a re-test of the

area smoke detector which incorrectly identified a fire alarm condition as a trouble signal.

The HVAC contractor has started repair work on the system. Plans have been proposed to shut down the restaurant on Friday, May 24 and complete all repairs to re-open the restaurant on Tuesday, May 28. At that time, Fire Protection staff will re-inspect and test the systems.

I will provide you with further information as it becomes available.

David Warren, Supervisor
Fire Protection
Risk Management

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Attachment